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Former Marine is University of Montana freshman student

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NEWS

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FORMER MARINE IS
UM FRESHMAN STUDENT

by Jim Eggensperger
UM Information Services

MISSOULA---

Larry Cromwell is a 20-year old University of Montana freshman, as well as a veteran Marine with 13 months service in South Vietnam.

He is the son of a UM law professor and wife, Mr. and Mrs. Gardner Cromwell. Larry enlisted in the Marine Corps immediately after being graduated from Hellgate High School in 1966 and fought in Vietnam between January 1967 and March 1968. He won a purple heart after he was hit by shrapnel from a rocket shell that landed next to his foxhole.

This interesting young man is tall, about 6'1", strong looking, sporting a blonde mustache, with many well defined ideas about himself, his society and other students. He is majoring in creative writing.

He said he joined up because, "I could not reconcile with myself the thought that there were others less fortunate than I dying in Vietnam so I could go to school."

Another reason he enlisted and subsequently volunteered for Vietnam duty was his opposition to being drafted and "having someone else run my life." He felt it his duty to serve because, "I don't believe anything other than chance caused me to be born in the United States and be an American citizen." With his citizenship he believes there are certain privileges and obligations, one of which is military service.

He feels strongly about student dissent on campuses in America and expresses his opinions readily.

"Most student dissent is personal cowardice masked by questionable questions of general and most often ambiguous morality," the former Marine said. "I don't think there would be so many pacifists if there were no draft."

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"Students don't have the experience of living and maturing to decide things for society. They are of worth to society when they have taken a responsible place in it. They have the right to be critical only when they are contributing to society," Cromwell said. He filled out his application forms for the University atop Con Thien hill in Vietnam.

According to Gromwell, the difference between him and other college freshmen is that he knows where he is going and recognizes necessity more than other freshmen. He says he has a good idea of the role he is going to play in society, whereas other freshmen, having lived in a protected environment for the last 12 years at home and having^{just} graduated into another, that of college, have not faced a true world, but a small segment.

He said he thinks the quality of the faculty at the University is good, but "there are some teachers I wouldn't want to teach my children."

He attributes the few exceptions among the faculty to a not quite adequate budget and said, "The better the teacher, the more money is needed. If there is not enough money, you settle for someone less capable or experienced. More money will be needed in the future if Montana is going to maintain its educational level. The extra-academic benefits of the state, the hunting, fishing and forests, are becoming depleted and soon will not attract faculty as they do now."

Cromwell's brother, who was graduated from high school last spring, is finishing Marine boot camp at present.

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